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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/686,429	10/14/2003	W. Todd Daniell	190250-1240	7282
38823 7590 05/07/2007 THOMAS, KAYDEN, HORSTEMEYER & RISLEY, LLP/ BELLSOUTH I.P. CORP 100 GALLERIA PARKWAY SUITE 1750 ATLANTA, GA 30339			EXAMINER LAI, MICHAEL C	
			ART UNIT 2109	PAPER NUMBER
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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/686,429

Applicant(s)

DANIELL, W. TODD

Examiner

Michael C. Lai

Art Unit

2143

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 14 October 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-12 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-12 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 06FEB2004.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Specification

1. The disclosure is objected to under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement for Claim 9. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention. The specification fails to describe exactly how each user represents a unique individual.

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1-8, 10-12 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ueno et al. (US Patent 6,226,670, hereinafter Ueno), in view of Srivastava et al. (US Patent 6,374,292, hereinafter Srivastava).

3. Regarding Claim 1, Ueno in view of Srivastava discloses a system for directing the group intended electronic communication to the group mailbox wherein said electronic communication in said group mailbox being accessible by multiple members of the group, the electronic communication having a status indicating action taken on

Art Unit: 2143

the electronic communication by a member of the group, the status providing visibility of actions taken with respect to the electronic communication by one member of the group to other members of the group.

In the disclosure for his invention, Ueno teaches that a mail receptor may accumulate the received e-mail in the group mail spools corresponding to the group mail address [Col 3, Lines 25-39], but does not explicitly disclose wherein said electronic communication in said group mailbox being accessible by multiple members of the group, the electronic communication having a status indicating action taken on the electronic communication by a member of the group, the status providing visibility of actions taken with respect to the electronic communication by one member of the group to other members of the group.

Srivastava, for his invention, however, discloses client/server data communication systems, and, in particular, to a mail server included in an e-mail system for use within a client/server data processing system [Srivastava: Col 1, Lines 30-35]. He further discloses an internet e-mail system (300) including an internet mail server (301) coupled to a user mailbox (303, and in a preferred embodiment, the mail server (301) includes a message store unit (304) coupled to a transfer unit (302) that is used to store messages for later transmission to the user mailbox (303) [Fig. 2] [Col 4 Lines 25-43].

Additionally, in Figure 3, Srivastava discloses the message store (304) organized as a set of folders and user mailboxes. Individual users may own folders and/or mailboxes, and ownership of a folder or mailbox can be also be assigned to, or shared

Art Unit: 2143

by, a group or common users (e.g., shared folders 408) [Col 4, Lines 52-61], (shared mailbox [Col 5 Line 61 – Col 6 Line 8] [Fig. 3]. In a preferred embodiment, he further teaches that only one copy of each message is maintained in the message store (304), and in the case where the message store receives a message addressed to a group/multiple users (based upon an associated distribution list), a reference (link) to the message is placed in each user's inbox rather than having a copy of the message in each user's inbox associated with the group. Under this embodiment, multiple instances or copies of an e-mail message do not exist, and thus only one copy of the message is available for delivery, retrieval, and/or manipulation by a user or users of a group. Also, according to Srivastava, status information (i.e., new, unread, replied to, deleted, etc.) corresponding to individual messages received is maintained per mailbox group [Col 4, Line 65 – Col 5, Line 8], and based on the disclosure, applies to both group mailboxes and individually owned mailboxes.

It would therefore be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify and/or combine Ueno's invention with the feature of providing a group mailbox wherein e-mail messages addressed to a group of users (in association with a distribution list) can be stored and access to the message is shared by users of the group for processing, to include maintenance of status information for the message as disclosed by Srivastava, for the motivation of saving disk space [Col 5, Line 5].

4. Regarding Claim 2, Srivastava further discloses the setting of indications [Col 5, Lines 5-8].

Art Unit: 2143

5. Regarding Claim 3, Srivastava further discloses the second setting [Col 5, Lines 5-8].

6. Regarding Claim 4, Srivastava further discloses that each indicator is indicative of whether the corresponding user has selected the group email message [Col 4, Line 52 – Col 5, Line 8, adding a reference to the message in each user's inbox].

7. Regarding Claim 5, Srivastava further discloses the read indicator [Col 5, Lines 5-8]. The indicator that indicates whether the corresponding user has opened the group email message is considered the same as the indicator that the corresponding user has read the group email message.

8. Regarding Claim 6, Srivastava further discloses the delete indicator [Col 5, Lines 5-8].

9. Regarding Claim 7, Srivastava further discloses means for indicating whether a user has deleted the group message [Col 4, Line 52 – Col 5, Line 8, adding a reference to the message in each user's inbox].

10. Regarding Claim 8, both Ueno and Srivastava do not disclose the use of an XML tag for the indicator. However, Stark et al. [Pub. No. US 2003/0233420 A1, hereinafter Stark] discloses embedded XML tags that describe certain attributes of messages [Page 3, Para. 0035]. It would therefore be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to use an XML tag for the indicator.

11. Regarding Claim 10, Ueno in view of Srivastava discloses a method for directing the group intended electronic communication to the group mailbox wherein said electronic communication in said group mailbox being accessible by multiple members

Art Unit: 2143

of the group, the electronic communication having a status indicating action taken on the electronic communication by a member of the group, the status providing visibility of actions taken with respect to the electronic communication by one member of the group to other members of the group.

In the disclosure for his invention, Ueno teaches that a mail receptor may accumulate the received e-mail in the group mail spools corresponding to the group mail address [Col 3, Lines 25-39], but does not explicitly disclose wherein said electronic communication in said group mailbox being accessible by multiple members of the group, the electronic communication having a status indicating action taken on the electronic communication by a member of the group, the status providing visibility of actions taken with respect to the electronic communication by one member of the group to other members of the group.

Srivastava, for his invention, however, discloses client/server data communication systems, and, in particular, to a mail server included in an e-mail system for use within a client/server data processing system [Srivastava: Col 1, Lines 30-35]. He further discloses an internet e-mail system (300) including an internet mail server (301) coupled to a user mailbox (303, and in a preferred embodiment, the mail server (301) includes a message store unit (304) coupled to a transfer unit (302) that is used to store messages for later transmission to the user mailbox (303) [Fig. 2] [Col 4 Lines 25-43].

Additionally, in Figure 3, Srivastava discloses the message store (304) organized as a set of folders and user mailboxes. Individual users may own folders and/or

Art Unit: 2143

mailboxes, and ownership of a folder or mailbox can be also be assigned to, or shared by, a group or common users (e.g., shared folders 408) [Col 4, Lines 52-61], (shared mailbox [Col 5 Line 61 – Col 6 Line 8] [Fig. 3]. In a preferred embodiment, he further teaches that only one copy of each message is maintained in the message store (304), and in the case where the message store receives a message addressed to a group/multiple users (based upon an associated distribution list), a reference (link) to the message is placed in each user's inbox rather than having a copy of the message in each user's inbox associated with the group. Under this embodiment, multiple instances or copies of an e-mail message do not exist, and thus only one copy of the message is available for delivery, retrieval, and/or manipulation by a user or users of a group. Also, according to Srivastava, status information (i.e., new, unread, replied to, deleted, etc.) corresponding to individual messages received is maintained per mailbox group [Col 4, Line 65 – Col 5, Line 8], and based on the disclosure, applies to both group mailboxes and individually owned mailboxes.

12. It would therefore be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify and/or combine Ueno's invention with the feature of providing a group mailbox wherein e-mail messages addressed to a group of users (in association with a distribution list) can be stored and access to the message is shared by users of the group for processing, to include maintenance of status information for the message as disclosed by Srivastava, for the motivation of saving disk space [Col 5, Line 5].

13. Regarding Claim 11, Srivastava further discloses the read indicator [Col 5, Lines 5-8].

Art Unit: 2143

14. Regarding Claim 12, Srivastava further discloses the delete indicator [Col 5, Lines 5-8].

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

15. Claim 9 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention. The specification fails to describe exactly how each user represents a unique individual.

16. Claim 9 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph, set forth in this Office action and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Michael C. Lai whose telephone number is (571) 270-3236. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 7:30 - 5:00 EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Marvin Lateef can be reached on (571) 272-5026. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Art Unit: 2143

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

Michael C. Lai
24APR2007



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SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER